



Testimony presented by Art Tarantino, M.D.

In Public Health Committee

On

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H.B. No. 6284 AN ACT CONCERNING THE ADVERTISING OF SERVICES BY HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS.

Good Afternoon Senator Gerrantana, Rep Ritter and other distinguished members of the Public Health Committee. I am Art TarantinoMD, a board certified urologist practicing in Hartford, CT. I am here to represent the over 1000 physicians in the medical specialties of Dermatology, Ophthalmology, Otolaryngology and Urology. On behalf of this group of dedicated physicians, we thank this committee for raising an Act Concerning the Advertising of Services by Healthcare Providers.

Over the past decade there has been an exponential increase in the number of cosmetic services offered to patients. These include laser treatments, “Botox” and facial fillers. For many reasons there has also been a proliferation of the number of practitioners who offer these services. They can provide a source of income in a time of declining reimbursements and are generally perceived as “minimally invasive”, “safe” and often times a quick “lunch time” fix. There is great variation in the backgrounds of providers performing these services. Some have been trained in core specialties like Plastic Surgery, ENT, Dermatology, Ophthalmology where understanding of anatomy, and laser physics are an integral part of training. Others receive training in a weekend course or by representatives of the companies where comprehensive understanding of these complex factors is not undertaken.

There is perception that these procedures are safe quick and easy. But complications can and do occur. These complications may include burns, scarring, infection, skin necrosis, blindness, stroke and even death. These complications can be minimized by a thorough understanding of anatomy and laser parameters. But they can and do occur even in the most skilled hands.

When these procedures are performed in hair salons or spa like locations there is often a trivialization of these risks. In the same vein when there are groupings and special offers it seems as if we have crossed the line from medical procedure to cosmetic service. Some of our dermatology colleagues are already fielding calls from patients treated in such facilities who have been advised to seek dermatology attention to address any problems.

At a time when physicians are expected to have increased regulation over safety, compliance, and protocols for minimizing risk it seems unfathomable that we are permitting the laxity of regulation and transparency of

having these procedures performed by providers with varying degrees of training and expertise in non traditional settings. Of special concern is the recent trend of performing these procedures in hair salons. These places are not regulated at all with regards to infection control and hazardous waste disposal. We should all be held to the same standards of quality and patient safety. In the interest of public safety it is imperative that we address these issues. I am hopeful that the proposed bill HB 6284 will be a start in our legislative process to make sure the public is safe and well informed when it comes to these procedures